

## **“Charting the Landscape/Mapping New Paths”: Project Descriptions**

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- 1. Project Name: Literacy and Inquiry Through School Libraries**
- 2. Goal: We are developing school library programs in New York City that serve as instructional hubs for their school campuses, integrate the teaching of inquiry and literacy skills into classroom instruction, provide access to high-quality resources, and build the capacity of teachers and librarians to teach in-depth, inquiry-based units. As a part of this effort, we are building collaborations with community partners, such as public libraries, museums, arts organizations, and youth development organizations.**
- 3. Participating institutions/agencies: New Visions for Public Schools. Collaborations with the three New York public library systems, the Lincoln Center Institute, the Department of Education, and numerous other cultural institutions and organizations.**
- 4. Your role/expertise in this type project: I have a lifelong career in school libraries and have written and edited articles and books about school libraries, literacy, and inquiry. I am working in a local education fund that is responsible for developing new small high schools, each of which is aligned with a community partner. I have conducted workshops on library program planning and inquiry throughout the country. I am currently serving on the Executive Board of the American Library Association.**
- 5. Outcomes / successes to-date: I have only been in New York City for two years, but I have found the entire library community to be extremely welcoming. I have formed a number of collaborations and intend to strengthen that work in the coming year.**
- 6. Lessons learned : I have certainly learned that any collaboration formed among different entities must take into account the different perspectives represented. The lens of museums is different from school libraries. The lens of public libraries is often quite different from the lens of school libraries. These differences provide opportunities for rich partnerships, but unless they are validated and incorporated, they can undermine any collaborative work. I see the role of school libraries as the connector between the schools and cultural institutions, with school librarians primarily responsible for teaching the information literacy/inquiry skills needed by students to take full advantage of informal learning opportunities. I think that establishing solid connections between K-12**

students and their community institutions is essential for building a learning society.

7. If we began anew we would ask these questions at the beginning: What are the beliefs about learning that underlie the work of school libraries, public libraries, and museums? How can those beliefs be connected? How will we know if we are making a difference in the learning lives of our students?
8. Critical success factors: Amount of collaboration within the schools between teachers and librarian, amount of collaboration between the schools and public libraries and museums, integration of inquiry into curriculum and instruction of schools, positive student attitudes to learning through community/cultural institutions, increased use of resources available from public libraries and cultural institutions, development of students' inquiry skills.
9. Our next steps will be: A colleague at New Visions, Sonnet Takahisa, comes from the museum world and was a co-principal at an outstanding school in NYC called the Museum School. We are planning to develop a strong collaborative partnership among libraries, schools, school libraries, and museums in our New Visions schools, developing and testing a model that we will share with others in this network.
10. What else? Thank you so much for convening this group. If we work together strategically, we can develop templates of collaboration that will strengthen all of our work and positively impact our communities across the country.